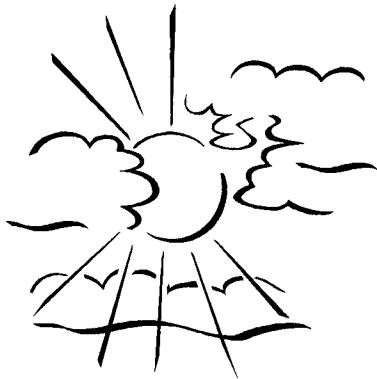


***Department  
of  
Human  
Services***

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394



\*Important story at this spot

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Tuesday, November 22, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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# Couples turn out for annual adoption day

## Adoption comes in 'whirlwind' for one couple

By IAN C. STOREY

Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVERSE CITY - The ink had barely dried on the last of their adoption paperwork when Chad and Dawn Bousamra received a call from Catholic Human Services about William.

"It has been a whirlwind tour of how it is to be parents," said Dawn Bousamra. "It has been a little busy, but we are pretty proud of him. It felt natural immediately. I knew he was mine."

Three weeks before William, now five months old, was born in Grayling, the Bousamras filed a portfolio for parents to review, and expected a wait of at least a few months.

But life is full of surprises.

"We thought we were going to have about nine months working with a birth mother, but there we were," Chad Bousamra, 33, of Interlochen, said with a laugh. "We didn't have a bottle in the house and the baby's room wasn't painted. We were lucky our neighbors had a car seat for us."

Today, William's adoption will be one of more than 20 that Grand Traverse County Family Court Judge David Stowe will finalize as part of the third annual Michigan Adoption Day.

"It is by far the highlight of what I do as a probate and family court judge," said Stowe. "It is just a wonderful, magical time."

"This truly is a pretty momentous occasion for our community when we can finalize adoption for 20 children or more in one day," he said.

Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Weaver will attend the ceremony and assist Stowe in finalizing the adoptions.

The day will be even more special for the Bousamras to be able to finalize their adoption of

"Will" in front of family friends and co-workers. Chad is a probation officer who works with Stowe in 13th Circuit Court.

"We like the idea of open adoption because he is going to have questions when he gets older," he said. "And it will be comfortable knowing my boss will be presiding over the hearing. It is like a family here. We are all very close."

Last year, 25 children were adopted by families throughout the Grand Traverse region, the second most of any county in the state.

"Adoption just felt like a fit for our family," said Dawn Bousamra, 31. "We are just very blessed to have a beautiful and healthy baby."

Stowe is scheduled to finalize his first adoption at 8:15 a.m. and said some 30 counties throughout the state are expected to participate in today's event.

Stowe said the state Department of Human Services will provide mementos to newly adoptive families and a luncheon for those families and friends after the hearings.

"We have a tremendously supportive community and individuals in it who desire to provide permanency for these children, some of which are fairly special need," said Stowe.

For the Bousamras and hundreds others across the state today, the ceremony marks the last step in a "worthwhile" process.

"I think it is going to be peace of mind knowing he is completely ours," said Chad Bousamra.

"We have already felt like we were his parents since the first day, but this completes the court process and I think we will feel like he is ours."

Local News

## Adoption events slated

By ERICA KOLASKI

Tribune Staff Writer

CHEBOYGAN - As November marks adoption month across the nation, the Cheboygan Probate and Family Court will be celebrate Michigan's third Adoption Day today. From 3:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. today, the court plans to host an adoption open house to celebrate the adoption of 11 children to eight families this past year, said Judge Robert John Butts.

This year's event will again include the finalization of a local adoption.

"We're very excited about this event," said Butts. "In most cases, people aren't happy to come to court, but adoptions are the one exception: a joyous occasion for the families and for the court, the Department of Human Services and the service providers involved with the families."

Butts said that adoption is the only answer for children who can never return home because of abuse or neglect. "There are many children available for adoption here in Michigan, waiting for safe and loving homes," he said. "There are also many children who have never really known their father or their mother, and a step-parent comes forward and becomes that needed parent."

Butts said that Michigan Adoption Day has taken place the Tuesday before Thanksgiving for the past two years, to coincide with the theme "giving thanks for families."

He said that last year in Michigan, 42 Michigan counties finalized 339 adoptions and held events like the one in Cheboygan to help educate potential adoptive parents.

For more information on Michigan adoptions, call 1-800-589-6723 or visit [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org). Other local contact numbers include the Department of Human Services at 627-8500, Cheboygan County Family Court at 627-8823, Catholic Human Services at 947-8110 or Child and Family Services at 1-800-779-0396.

# **Adoption proceedings open to public at Crosstown Center**

The Kalamazoo Gazette

Sunday, November 20, 2005

By Mary Haskamp

Tuesday is Michigan Adoption Day.

This day has been set aside to educate the public about the adoption process and the availability of children for adoption.

The Kalamazoo courts will observe Michigan Adoption Day from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tuesday, at the Crosstown Center, 150 E. Crosstown Parkway. The Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services, Bethany Christian Services, Catholic Social Services, Family Adoption Consultants, Family & Children Services Inc., Lutheran Adoption Services and the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) will have personnel available to answer questions and provide information.

There will be two panel discussions. The first will consist of adoptive parents and professionals who will discuss post-adoption services and issues. The second panel features professionals discussing subsidy issues, home studies, child assessments and tax credit information.

Families participating in the day's events have agreed to allow the public to view their adoption confirmation hearing. Because adoption court proceedings are confidential, this is the only time the court doors will be open to the general public to witness the joy of finalizing an adoption.

But even as we celebrate with these young people and their families, there are many others who want and need permanent homes.

Consider these numbers: In fiscal year 2004 alone 3,433 children became wards of the state. At any given time Michigan has over 19,000 children and youth in foster care.

Too many foster children simply remain in care. Statistics tell us that after age 11, a child's chances of being adopted are very slim. As a result, these young people will simply "age out" of the system. Compared to their peers in stable homes, these former foster children are at increased risk for homelessness, unemployment, teen pregnancy and other negative outcomes.

You do not need to be rich to adopt. Character, love and stability are the most precious commodities you can offer a child.

Mary Haskamp is an adoption specialist with the probate court.

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

A child is waiting

## Lovable boy hopes for family

By Rosemary Dorr / Special to The Detroit News

"Hello," says 10-year-old Gregory with a smile. He eagerly reports, "I had a good day today. School is great. I got As and Bs."

A fifth-grader in special education classes, Gregory's grades are much improved this year. "My most favorite (class) is computers," he says. "I get my homework all right, then I play games. I like video games -- I got a whole bunch I like. Basketball, too. I have a little sister and we go places."

His foster mother of three years notes, "Gregory has an amazing personality. There's nothing shy about him. He'll sing for you, rap for you, dance for you. He's a very happy boy."

She adds, "He's very smart and can draw like a grown person. He's helpful. He needs to calm down and takes medication for hyperactivity -- you need patience, but most of the time he's good."

"I'm lovable," Gregory exclaims. "I'm kind of like a normal kid. I can draw real nice and I love cooking and eating."

His adoption worker hopes to find the "talkative, really personable" boy a permanent caring family. She adds, "He definitely needs to stay in touch with his sister."

Might you consider adoption? Please talk with Lisa Avery at Catholic Social Services of Wayne County, (313) 883-7760.

**Last column's children:** Brothers Julio, 12, and Carlos, 10, are friendly, creative and kind. For information, call Bonnie Powers at Wayne County Department of Human Services, (313) 396-0394.

*A child is waiting appears Tuesdays in Features.*

Published November 22, 2005

## **Students, Salvation Army join forces to feed hungry**

Lansing State Journal

Lansing students served up a Thanksgiving feast for more than 300 people Monday at the Salvation Army center.

"I think we're making a positive difference," said 13-year-old Ieisha Summerville, a member of the Young Educators Club at Gardner Middle School. "They need some place to eat."

Kids from Eastern High School's Asian American Club and Physics and Engineering Club also passed out turkey, mashed potatoes, yams and other fixings.

The Salvation Army provides a free Thanksgiving meal to local homeless and low-income families every year.

"It gives them a chance to see that not everyone is as blessed as they are," community programs director Chuck Calati said of the student volunteers. "It's a tough time of year if you don't have much money."

From staff writer Nicole Geary

# **Holiday meals free for the needy**

## **Some are Wednesday, some are Thursday**

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

From Ann Arbor News staff reports

A number of area organizations will be serving free meals this week to celebrate Thanksgiving. St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Ann Arbor will serve hot breakfast on Thanksgiving morning from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. at 306 N. Division Street. For information, call (734) 663-6439.

The Original Cottage Inn, at 512 E. William Street in Ann Arbor, will have turkey, stuffing, vegetables, cranberries, rice pudding, rolls, coffee and beverages in a Thanksgiving meal served between 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. for the needy and homeless. The restaurant usually serves about 500 dinners and the meal is staffed by volunteers. For information, call (734) 663-3379.

The Salvation Army will have turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, green bean casserole and cranberry sauce at 9 S. Park St. in Ypsilanti, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday. To volunteer or make a donation, contact Maj. John Klammer at (734) 482-4700.

Holy Trinity Church at 511 W. Forest in Ypsilanti will hold its traditional luncheon from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thanksgiving Day. To donate food or money, call (734) 482-1400.

Dimitri's Kitchen, 11511 Belleville Road, will hold its traditional dinner starting at 4 p.m. Wednesday. The restaurant served about 1,700 people a year ago. To volunteer or make a donation, call (734) 699-7555.

Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels will deliver Thanksgiving dinners to about 170 homebound and disabled residents from 10 a.m. to noon. While it is too late to volunteer for Thanksgiving, the organization is looking for meal delivery help for Christmas and New Year's Day. Call (734) 487-9669.

# Shepherds Table readies for Thanksgiving meal

November 22, 2005

By Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News

CADILLAC - Turkey, stuffing and all the trimmings of a big Thanksgiving meal should be common-place for all families - the Shepherds Table helps to ensure it is.

For the 15th year, the local soup kitchen will be hosting a traditional Thanksgiving meal and everyone and anyone is invited to attend. Although the bi-weekly meals are served 4 to 6 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday at the First Baptist Church in Cadillac, on Thanksgiving, the meal is served at a special time, noon to 2 p.m.

Director of Shepherds Table, Kathy Balzuweit said on average about 250 people are served per meal but on Thanksgiving it changes a little.

"We have been showing a lot bigger numbers toward the end of the month. We usually get a smaller crowd (on Thanksgiving) at the Shepherds Table because a lot of people are going to be with family, but there are a lot more delivery meals," she said. "We deliver 50 meals a day to shutins plus we give out another 25 to 50 meals to those who come in."

On top of the meals they deliver to residents who are unable to make it to the soup kitchen, Balzuweit said about 30 meals will be delivered to Kirkland Terrace on Thursday. Likewise, since Dial-A-Ride will not be running on the holiday, people may call the soup kitchen to get a ride.

"We would much rather have them come in for the fellowship but for the people who are homebound, ill or disabled, we deliver to them," she said. "We get references from Love INC and churches."

Over the years, Balzuweit said the number of meals served has increased a lot but one thing that has not changed is the gratitude of many of the people who eat at the Shepherds Table.

Whether it is the food, the people volunteering or gratitude for the church allowing the meals to be served, the majority of the people are grateful, she said.

For Balzuweit, that is all that matters.

"The people that come are very grateful of the help of the volunteers and the generosity of the community for the food and the church to open its doors. I think most people are very grateful," she said.

Regardless of the turnout, Balzuweit said the Shepherds Table will be ready for a great meal.



“I wonder if we will have a lot more people. It's impossible to tell because we don't take reservations,” she said. “Everyone is welcome. It is free and it will be a really good meal. People should call if they need a ride or a meal delivered.”

For more information, a ride or to have a meal delivered call Balzuweit at 775-0608; Anita Banks at 775-5797 or First Baptist Church at 775-5629.

[rcharmoli@cadillacnews.com](mailto:rcharmoli@cadillacnews.com) | 775-NEWS (6397)

# Holiday dinners plentiful this week

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

By Jaclyn Roeschke  
jroeschke@citpat.com -- 768-4945

Several area churches and ministry groups are offering free Thanksgiving dinners in Jackson County, and many area residents are expected to take advantage of the warm atmosphere and good food.

"We want to provide a service for people who need it, for somebody who doesn't have anywhere to go," said Tami Canada, who organizes a free dinner at First Church of the Nazarene. "There's also people who don't want to cook -- maybe they want to go out to eat -- but just want a good, home-cooked meal."

This is the second year the church has organized the event, which will take place from 1 to 4 p.m. Thursday at the church, 3905 Clinton Road. About 20 members of the congregation prepare and serve the dinner.

"Everyone's very warm, very friendly," she said. "People who don't even know each other are talking to each other. There's a lot of laughing -- it's just a really good time."

Other local Thanksgiving dinners include a free one hosted by the new City of Zion Ministry from 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday at the St. Joseph Home for Children, 1000 E. Porter St.

The St. Joseph Home for Children is co-sponsoring the meal, which is open to the public. Those who wish to attend should use the south entrance.

Anyone who wants to help serve the food may call Pastor Jimmy Suddeth at 788-8532.

City of Zion, which was recently organized, will also conduct its first worship service at 11 a.m. Dec. 4 in the gym of the St. Joseph Home.

Also Thursday, Word of Light Christian Center, 800 S. Cooper St., will serve a free Thanksgiving dinner.

The traditional dinner, which will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., will be prepared by about 75 volunteers from the church congregation.

This is the first year the Christian Center will host the event, which also includes free rides to the dinner. For transportation, call the church office at 782-7755 by Wednesday.

# **Church group to offer post-Thanksgiving meal**

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

By George Jaksa

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FLINT - A youth group from the Owosso Church of the Nazarene will serve a free meal from 1-3 p.m. Friday in the chapel at Oak Street, the former Olive Branch Mission, 718 Oak St. Al Povinelli, who heads the youth group with his wife, Angie, said the ham and turkey meal is open to anyone. He said the post-Thanksgiving Day meal was scheduled to give the needy another chance for a festive meal.

# Turkeys roasting all over as free meals are readied for those in need

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

By Teresa Taylor Williams

MUSKEGON CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER WITH LOCAL REPORTS

Area organizations are working hard to ensure no one goes without a good meal this Thanksgiving, and are busy making plans for Christmas.

The Muskegon Rescue Mission, 400 Laketon, served turkey dinners to 350 families on Sunday. More than 300 Thanksgiving food baskets were distributed Monday, and more are to be given away today.

About 75 similar baskets were given away today at Mission for Area People. Although the recipients were pre-screened, Director Diane Stubbs said "we won't turn anyone away who we know is in need."

The Salvation Army began taking names of needy families for Thanksgiving in October. With the help of volunteers, 1,600 families will receive hot meals delivered to them Thanksgiving Day in what volunteers call the "Turkey Run," a 15-year tradition in Muskegon.

Volunteers are needed between 9:30 a.m. to noon to help deliver the meals, according to Major Max Grindle, commanding officer of Salvation Army of Muskegon. Those interested may call the Salvation Army office at 773-3284, or show up at 9:30 a.m. Thursday at Reeths-Puffer High School, 1545 N. Roberts.

"It's really a fun time. We're always looking for people interested in helping, especially to deliver," Grindle said.

Kainay Community Church and First Congregational Church are partnering to provide a Thanksgiving dinner to those in need starting at noon Thursday at First Congregational, 1201 Jefferson.

The dinner is open to the public, but organizers ask that those who plan to come call the church, (231) 726-3254, immediately to ensure an accurate count and food for all.

The men and women of Anderson Global, formerly Anderson Pattern, 500 W. Sherman, will continue a Thanksgiving tradition that employees started in 1999 to help senior citizens in need who are isolated and without families.

Anderson employees will deliver Thanksgiving turkeys "and all the fixin's" -- already cooked and ready to eat -- to 23 senior citizens on Wednesday afternoon.

The turkey delivery is just one of the projects of the company's "social committee" which is organized by Angel Ball, Scott Sutton and Michelle Henderson. The committee "passes the hat" and collects contributions for the dinners, which are purchased from Meijer Inc.

"We wanted to do the most good we could ... as a way to express our caring," Ball said.

The committee collects names of senior citizens from Anderson employees. This year, they also asked for referrals from Senior Resources, 255 W. Sherman, an area agency on aging.

Since 1999, Anderson employees have provided Thanksgiving dinners for 72 senior citizens. The group also delivers meals at Christmas.

The annual Pre-Thanksgiving Free Community Dinner was slated for today at Spring Street Missionary Baptist Church's I.G. Kirksey Fellowship Hall, 912 Spring.

# **Second Chance concept saves young lives, and county budgets**

Bay City Times Editorial

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

Roscommon County appears to have hit upon a winning formula for dealing with delinquents. Give them a Second Chance.

A dozen years ago, the county's judges, probation officers and educators were pulling their hair out in frustration over an expensive juvenile detention system that wasn't working.

Like a lot of rural counties, they'd ship kids off to other counties' boot camps or detention centers. The young offenders would come back as unruly as ever.

So leaders started Second Chance Academy in an annex of the Roscommon County Courthouse. There, about 30 juvenile offenders are sentenced to live at home and attend school.

This special school is for academics, of course, but most importantly for this group, it's a school to teach proper behavior.

Even more interesting is that parents also must be enrolled in the county program and follow its rules. If they screw up, mom or dad could go to jail.

It's all about accountability - taking responsibility for your actions, attitudes and decisions. It's working.

Not only does it cost a fifth of what shipping kids to out-of-county detention did, Second Chance Academy is changing these children. A study showed that, after graduation, crime rates for Second Chance alumni were lower than the general population's.

Ogemaw County officials have noticed, and have sent some minors up to Roscommon this year.

By next fall, Ogemaw County intends to open its own academy.

It's a good idea that's saving youths from a lifetime of bad decisions and awful, often criminal, behavior. Given this Second Chance, they learn how to be productive members of society.

What a concept.

We hope it spreads.

11/19/2005 11:00:00 AM

## **Home searched**

# ***Pornographic materials found; two juveniles arrested***

By Corky Emrick  
Sturgis Journal

BURR OAK TWP. — Two juveniles face multiple felony charges after police searched a home Friday in Burr Oak Township.

Michigan State Police went to a home in the 63000 block of McHale Road to do a follow-up on an earlier report of criminal sexual conduct charge.

During Friday's search, police recovered pornographic material. Two juveniles are in custody and face multiple felony charges.

Troopers were assisted by White Pigeon Police and the St. Joseph County Area Narcotics Unit. The case remains under investigation.

# Former Gull Lake student sentenced in 2004 stabbing

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

lturner@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8564

Alyssa Foy was at the wrong place at the wrong time when Alexandra Riel stabbed her several times with a steak knife while the two were on a Gull Lake Community Schools bus in February 2004, Riel said Monday before she was sentenced for the attack.

Riel, 17, apologized to Foy, 14, and her family for the attack, which has left the younger girl with scars on her arm and shoulder and in fear of future attacks.

"It was all my fault," Riel said through tears. "I wish I could take it back. I do. I really do."

Riel originally was charged as an adult with assault with intent to commit murder and pleaded in September to a reduced charge of assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder.

However, Kalamazoo County Circuit Judge William G. Schma sentenced her as a juvenile under an agreement worked out by attorneys for both families.

Riel was named a ward of the state and must remain in the secured mental-health treatment center in Grand Rapids where she has been for many months, Schma ordered. She will remain on probation until age 21. She is not to have any contact with Foy or her family. She also was ordered to pay \$1,264.68 in victim restitution and court costs.

"It's been a nightmare for everyone," said Schma, who complimented both families for working to help the girls work through their problems and find an outcome agreeable to both sides.

It will, however, take some time for Foy to be able to forgive Riel for her actions.

"I have difficulty being in public places, thinking someone was going to come up behind me to attack me, but I am getting better with that," Foy wrote in a letter read in court. "I wake up screaming at night, waking everyone up because of nightmares. I'm so tired the next day because I try to keep myself awake so I won't dream."

When she dreams, Foy said she relives the attack.

Foy, then a 12-year-old middle school student, was sitting in the seat in front of Riel when Riel pulled out the serrated knife and stabbed her.

Riel, then 15, told police she took the knife to school because she was planning to kill someone. She said she had been thinking about killing or hurting someone for some time.

There was nothing that Foy did or said that drew Riel's action, she said Monday.

# Two parents face truancy charges

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

By Steven Hepker

hepker@citpat.com -- 768-4923

Making good on his vow to hold parents accountable, Jackson County Prosecutor Hank Zavislak today filed misdemeanor charges against two parents of habitual truants.

Zavislak declined to name the parents of the five children, who sporadically attend school in the Jackson and East Jackson districts.

"The boys have each missed 724 days of school starting in kindergarten," Zavislak said of two brothers in sixth and eighth grades. "They have missed the equivalent of two school years each." Three children in another family skipped more than 185 days in the last school year, Zavislak said.

It is the first time Zavislak has used a state law that makes parents accountable for children who routinely skip school.

The misdemeanor truancy charges against the parents come after repeated interventions by the courts, schools and community agencies, he said.

"Keeping kids in school has been a priority when I was sheriff and remains a priority today," Zavislak said in a prepared statement this morning.

He said research indicates chronic truancy foretells future criminal behavior. Dropouts also earn less than high school graduates, and far less than college graduates, over a lifetime.

The parents could face a mandatory two days in jail, and up to 90 days in jail, if found guilty.

"It is the schools' job to educate, but it is the parents' job to get their child in school," Zavislak said.



Michigan Report

November 21, 2005

## **YOUTH PRISON REMAINS CLOSED**

While there will be further legal wrangling over the closure of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility, the prison will remain closed through the duration of those disputes.

Ingham Circuit Judge James Giddings rejected a request by Baldwin and Webber Township to force the state to bring prisoners back to the privately-owned prison until the lawsuit over its closure was completed.

The communities had argued they had been promised at least 20 years of jobs and income from the facility in exchange for their efforts to build the utility systems to accommodate it.

But Mr. Giddings ruled that they, and by implication prison owner GEO Group, were not likely to prevail in the attempts to keep the facility open and to keep collecting rents.

He rejected the argument that has been proffered by both the communities and GEO Group that the lease could only be broken if the Legislature specifically forbade spending money on the facility. "The governor took out her pen and struck out this appropriation," he said. "Funds for this use in this lease have been prohibited. I don't see how the plaintiffs can prevail."

"Clearly, this is a situation that has significant financial impact on a relatively small community," Mr. Giddings said, noting that the state's flagging economy has affected other communities as well. "Regrettably, I don't have a magic wand in this room to make that go away."

Representatives of GEO Group and the communities had no comment after Monday's ruling.

The case now goes to trial to resolve whether the state had the right to cancel the lease once the funds were vetoed. Attorney Michael Hodge, representing all plaintiff parties, said they are not disputing the state's right to cancel the management contract. But he said the state could still be ordered to keep up the lease payments on the facility and could choose to operate it with state employees.

# Man gets 23 to 50 years for having sex with daughter

Trace Christenson

*The Battle Creek Enquirer*

A Chicago Heights, Ill., man who had two children with his daughter was sentenced to prison Monday by a Calhoun County judge.

Michael A. Amos, 36, was sentenced to a minimum of 23 years and nine months to a maximum of 50 years after pleading guilty in October to six counts of having sex with his daughter, now 15.

"Other than murder, it is hard to contemplate a more serious incident than this," Circuit Judge Conrad Sindt said. "It flies in the face of every value that our society holds dear."

But Amos' sister, Christina Woodbury, said while her brother "is sick and he needs some help, that was too much of a sentence. People kill people and aren't sentenced to that much. What he did was a serious crime, but it was an unfair sentence."

Amos was arrested after Battle Creek police said they found evidence that he had been having sex with his daughter in Battle Creek between Oct. 16, 2004, and March 27 while she was living in a foster care home. At the time, the girl had given birth to a child in May 2004 and was pregnant, eventually having the second

child in May 2005.

The girl eventually told investigators that her father started having sex with her when she was 8 or 9,

Assistant Prosecutor Michelle Richardson said Monday.

"He seems to have no remorse for what he did to his biological daughter," Richardson said, "by impregnating her with two children. He has no understanding of what he did ... ."

In court, Amos said only, "I apologize for what I did. I am saying I am sorry."

Defense Attorney Gary Gabry said Amos did not know he had a daughter until her mother lost custody in 2000.

"He had no relationship with her until she was deposited with the family. He wasn't aware that the girlfriend (his daughter) was pregnant and didn't know her until she came."

The girl was placed with Woodbury, Amos' sister, and she suspected an incestuous relationship. But without any evidence, she could not convince authorities in Cook County, Ill., or Kalamazoo County, where the girl was placed in foster care, to investigate.

After the birth of the first child, Richardson explained, Amos and the girl suggested that the father was a school student.

It wasn't until after the girl became pregnant the second time that she confided in her foster mother that she was having sex with Amos.

Woodbury alleged authorities in Illinois and Michigan failed to investigate the relationship.

"The state failed this girl badly," she said. "I knew something was going on. I suggested testing the baby. They could have tested the baby, which is what they did after baby number two came."

But Woodbury acknowledged she didn't have evidence of the relationship between Amos and his daughter and Hallacy said without that, it's difficult for investigators to prove incest.

"It's unfortunate that it came to us, but sometimes that happens because investigators can't go to court and prove it," Hallacy said. "It was referred to us from Kalamazoo because they were not able to build a case, but we had the evidence to build a case."

Hallacy said while the case is notorious, incest is not that unusual. Seventeen cases of sexual abuse of a child by a parent were reported in Calhoun County in 2004.

"It is a case of being educated and aware," he said. "If you see it and recognize it, bring it to someone's attention. You

don't want to tarnish  
someone's name, but the  
system works carefully to  
check things out. If you have  
a suspicion, maybe there is  
more."

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Tuesday, November 22, 2005

Port Huron Times Herald Editorial

## Medicare drug plan getting lost in details

### Public needs help with options

The best thing to be said about the Medicare prescription drug benefit is it's better than nothing. From the perspective of senior citizens who have struggled these past years with rising drug costs, the discount plan is a step forward.

Unfortunately, it only is a baby step.

A week ago, seniors were given the chance to enroll in the new discount-drug program. So far, the opportunity has been a struggle.

The sign-up process ought to be simple. Instead, it is overwhelmingly complicated and confusing.

In Michigan, seniors must choose from 78 different plans. The choices and the myriad of educational literature have forced senior-advocacy groups and even nursing homes to schedule enrollment meetings to help guide seniors through the blizzard of information.

This isn't what prescription-drug reform was supposed to be. Relief ought to apply to the enrollment process, too.

There is no easy remedy. When Congress

passed the discount-drug plan in 2003, it was obvious then enrollment would be a problem. The flood of program options clearly challenged seniors and their advocates to find ones that were effective.

Sadly, the public and its advocates are left to figure out the drug plan - and they will have to do so fairly quickly. The enrollment deadline is May 15.

The least the federal government can do is address the confusion. Although some information is available at Medicare's Web site - [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) - a more aggressive public-information campaign should be launched to help ensure seniors make informed choices when they select their plans.

Health care - in all its forms - is a daunting, increasingly expensive proposition. The discount-drug program offers a measure of relief. The trick, though, is figuring out how to get it.

#### THINGS TO KNOW

##### ONLINE

##### MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION-DRUG COVERAGE

Everyone on Medicare can get drug coverage. No one will be denied because of health problems or income level.

The program is voluntary. People who have good drug coverage elsewhere do not need to sign up.

For those on a limited income, Medicare will pay nearly all prescription-drug costs.

If individual drug costs are deemed too high, a Medicare-approved plan will cover up to 95% of costs beyond a certain level in one year.

Plans vary as to what drugs are covered and how much an individual will have to pay.

Medicare Part D drug coverage is not the same as the Medicare-approved drug-discount cards available in 2004 and 2005.

##### AARP

The AARP offers a guide to understanding Medicare's new prescription-drug coverage at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org). At the bottom of the front page, click on Medicare under AARP Campaigns. Information includes enrollment dates and tips on picking a plan.

Medicare's Web site, [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), offers a breakdown of what plans are available in different areas. Other information found on the site includes cost estimates and lists of what drugs are covered by what plans. Senior citizens also can enroll through the Web site.

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## Out-of-state firm likely to get Medicaid contract - Indiana

Privatizing the application process for food stamps, Medicaid and other welfare benefits will cost the state at least \$1 billion, the largest contract in state history, the Daniels administration has told potential vendors.

The contract is almost certain to go to an out-of-state company despite Gov. Mitch Daniels' "Buy Indiana" executive order in which state agencies are required to spend 90 percent of procurement dollars on Indiana businesses.

Such a contract could be for as long as 10 years, said Mitch Roob Jr., head of the Family and Social Services Administration. He stressed that the state was still soliciting information from vendors that would shape the final contract, so it was premature to speculate on a dollar amount. The Indiana Department of Administration, however, made it clear to vendors that the contract is expected to top \$1 billion, more than twice as much as the state's largest active contract.

The state's largest contract is for \$490.8 million to Anthem Insurance Companies of Indianapolis for a state employee health maintenance organization for the four years that began Jan. 1, 2003. The FSSA contract will affect up to 1 million Hoosiers. Medicaid serves about 840,000 people; about 550,000 receive food stamps. About 145,000 receive benefits under another affected program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which provides payments for living expenses such as rent.

LETTERS

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

## **National health system would be more efficient**

Regarding a national health care plan: Let's face it - we all pay for each other's health care already. I pay part of the costs of my company-sponsored coverage with Blue Cross, and my company pays the rest. Where does my company get the money for that? From our customers, of course, who in turn price their services to cover their software expenses, in addition to their own costs for health care. When you buy a Ford truck, the price includes a share of Ford employees' health care costs. Ford in turn pays part of the health care costs for the employees of its suppliers. Some people argue against a national health care system because that will raise our taxes, but they don't realize they're already paying a hidden health care "tax" with almost every dollar they spend. And when you consider that private insurers are far less efficient in their administration and overhead than Medicare, it becomes clear that our current private-based system is costing all of us much more than it has to.

Don E. Bruey, Ann Arbor



Lansing State Journal

November 20, 2005

## **Bench warrants issued for nonpayment of child support**

Ingham and Eaton counties' Friend of the Court offices issued nearly 296 bench warrants in October against parents who are behind in child support payments.

For a searchable database of the list of bench warrants for parents in arrears, go to [www.lsj.com](http://www.lsj.com).

# Local Habitat for Humanity in trouble

November 22, 2005

Julie Knauf - [jknauf@dailypress.net](mailto:jknauf@dailypress.net)

ESCANABA - A decline in donations is making it hard for Bay de Noc Habitat for Humanity to stay afloat.

The nonprofit organization helps build affordable housing for low-income families in Delta County. To provide these homes, however, it requires volunteer labor and donations of money and materials from residents.

"Over the past two or three years, we've been seeing a decrease in donations," said John Kositzky, Bay De Noc Habitat for Humanity executive director.

Natural disasters, including the tsunami that hit Asia in 2004 and the recent hurricanes along the Gulf Coast, have impacted local donations, he said.

"Everybody that's going to donate to a cause of some sort has a dollar figure that they are comfortable with, and when something that catastrophic happens ... human instinct is going to make (residents) want to help the people down there. It's naturally going to take away from local charities," said Kositzky.

While victims of natural disasters are in need of assistance, he said residents must remember to help people in their own community also.

"We have to have cash to be able to build that house (for residents)," he said.

November 21, 2005

## Granholt Signs Bills to Create Thousands of Jobs for the Future, Diversify the Economy

*Signs business tax cuts, won't take effect until Legislature acts responsibly*

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholt today signed a package of bills that will invest more than \$2 billion to create thousands of new jobs and diversify the state's economy. The state will invest nearly \$1.5 billion dollars; that investment is expected to leverage an additional billion dollars or more in private investment focused in four key growth areas: life sciences, advanced manufacturing, alternative energy, and homeland security. The bills create a 21st Century Jobs Fund which will be used to invest in new technologies that will drive Michigan's economy into the future.

"Today is a turning point for Michigan's future," said Granholt. "By investing billions in diversifying our economy, we will create thousands of new, good-paying jobs that won't be outsourced and that will encourage our children to build their futures in Michigan."

The Governor's jobs plan will capitalize on the best research and commercialization opportunities in the four key growth areas in order to create good-paying, high-tech jobs that can't be outsourced. In addition, the bills signed today will create:

- up to \$450 million through the Venture Capital Investment fund to help start-up companies succeed;
- new tax incentives to encourage investors to make and keep their investment dollars here in Michigan;
- an improved business climate with lower fees and less red tape for new businesses in Michigan;
- new incentives to encourage life sciences companies to use Michigan suppliers and services.

Granholt also signed targeted tax cuts that would help existing manufacturers keep jobs and facilities in Michigan, encourage consolidation of their out-of-state operations here, and help small businesses by reducing their tax rate and cutting red tape. However, Granholt said the shortcomings in the Republican tax package would have given businesses a tax cut at the expense of citizens. She vetoed two tax bills that created new tax loopholes for business. Because the vetoed bills were tie-barred to the tax cut bills, the tax cuts will not take effect until the Legislature submits legislation to the Governor that will offer tax cuts for manufacturing without harming citizens.

Granholt said she expects the Legislature to make fixing the bills and sending her a package that offers manufacturers help without asking citizens to foot the bill their first priority upon returning to Lansing next week.

"Our manufacturers and small businesses deserve tax restructuring that provides immediate relief and levels the playing field," said Granholt. "But we can't offer that help at the expense of citizens. We've reached an agreement to do just that once before; I urge the Republicans to move quickly to do it again. In light of the GM announcements today, I urge the Republican leadership in the Legislature to get back to work and to act with urgency, in a bipartisan manner, to benefit all of Michigan. I am hopeful they will get back to work and get the job done right."

# Senate's Tax Bill Includes Incentives for Charity Gifts

By LYNNLEY BROWNING  
The New York Times

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The tax bill passed by the Senate last week includes several provisions to encourage giving to charities and could lead to a significant increase in donations.

The bill would add tax breaks for people who make small charitable contributions and for those who want to donate directly from their individual retirement accounts.

The Senate measure would have to be reconciled with the House's tax bill, which is now under consideration and lacks any substantial provisions on charitable giving.

Under the Senate bill, people who do not itemize deductions on their federal income tax returns would for the first time be able to deduct the amount they gave if it exceeded certain thresholds. The minimum would be \$210 for individuals and \$410 for married couples.

Taxpayers must now itemize, instead of taking the standard deduction, if they want a tax break for their gifts.

The provision would last two years and could increase charitable giving by \$1 billion a year at little cost to the government, said Patrick Lester, director of public policy for the United Way of America, the nation's largest charitable organization.

"This is by far the most important provision" in the Senate tax bill, Mr. Lester said, adding that he was particularly pleased there was no maximum amount that could be donated tax free.

Because lower-income taxpayers are less likely to itemize, the provision could prompt charitable giving to nonprofit organizations like churches and soup kitchens.

Another provision in the Senate bill would make it possible for taxpayers who reach age 70 1/2 and who have not yet fully tapped into their individual retirement accounts to make tax-free donations to charities straight from the accounts. Taxpayers must now cash out of their accounts and pay taxes on the amount withdrawn before making donations.

The provision could lead to several billion dollars of additional charitable giving a year, according to estimates by the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation. But it would cost the Treasury some \$914 million a year in lost taxes.

Universities and nonprofit hospitals are expected to benefit the most from such a measure.

The Senate also intends to curb some abuses of the rules on charitable giving. The Internal Revenue Service has said that tax dodges through nonprofit organizations are the fastest-growing type of tax crime. The bill would make tax-exempt organizations liable for penalties if they

participated directly or indirectly in prohibited tax shelters. A typical abuse involves a charity's temporarily holding taxable assets owned by a commercial entity.

Curbing abuses with life insurance contracts is another goal of the legislation. It would levy an excise tax, equal to the acquisition cost of the insurance contract, on any buyer of a contract that is then used partly to benefit a charity.

The Senate is hoping to clamp down on donor-advised funds, which are set up by individuals, families or businesses to make contributions to specific charities. Such funds have been a source of abuse, with some supporting lavish travel and other improper perks by family members.

C. Eugene Steuerle, a tax policy analyst at the nonpartisan Urban Institute, a research organization in Washington, said yesterday that the Senate tax bill was unusual in that it both "expands incentives and cuts back on abuses."

The combination, Mr. Steuerle said, "has ended up to be a fairly good one."

# Reforms center on making sure welfare programs, not just recipients, work

Monday, November 21, 2005

By Sharon Emery  
Lansing Bureau

LANSING -- How do you find a good-paying job for someone who's been on welfare for four years, is functionally illiterate, has two kids and trouble finding day care, no car and, in some cases, no social skills or even teeth?

Michigan is about to tackle that question head-on, in bills slated for introduction this week. It's a problem that's bedeviled Congress, which has passed several times on overhauling the landmark 1996 welfare reform law that requires recipients to either work or prepare for work to receive cash assistance.

The politically popular policy removed millions of people from the nation's welfare rolls, including some 400,000 through Michigan's Work First program.

But nearly 78,000 Michigan households (some 211,400 people, including children) remain on the welfare rolls, and some 13,500 households (50,367 people) have been there four years or longer.

Enter Republican legislators and policy-makers in the Democratic administration of Gov. Jennifer Granholm who are hoping to craft a plan that can be written into law when the state's welfare-to-work law expires Dec. 31.

"What we learned from Work First is that it's not enough to just get a job," Marianne Udow, director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, said in an interview.

Although there are incentives for welfare recipients to find a job for at least 90 days, most end up back on the rolls, she said. Her department has proposed a new program targeting long-term self-sufficiency -- Jobs, Education and Training (JET) -- to replace Work First.

"Our clients clearly need help getting stabilized for longer periods of time."

Or, as House Republicans first suggested during state budget negotiations last summer, they need to be motivated by a benefit cutoff if they don't find and keep work after four years on welfare.

The cutoff wasn't included in the final budget plan, but lawmakers are in the throes of crafting reforms that provide a mix of supports and sanctions.

There is general agreement on the need for better and more-immediate supports and programs: education, work-readiness, substance abuse treatment and life and social skills that can help people not only get jobs, but keep them.

The flash point will clearly be the sanctions. While there is a five-year federal limit on cash assistance, 20 percent of Michigan's welfare caseload can remain longer due to the state's stumbling economy. About 13 percent of Michigan's caseload exceeds the five-year limit, up from 10 percent in 2003.

The administration is adamant that benefits be continued indefinitely, as long as the person is in full compliance with program requirements.

"Those who have been in the system the longest have significant barriers to independence," Udow said. "It's not enough to say ... that they're not motivated enough and we need to throw them off the rolls."

But as Sen. Ken Sikkema, R-Wyoming, warned in a statement last month, while the social safety net is designed to help people until they become self-sufficient, it's time "to make sure that safety net hasn't taken on a larger role than was ever intended."

The debate centers on the long-term recipient who continues to languish on a \$459 monthly grant for a mom and two kids, the typical Family Independence Program (FIP) household.

Since the state's program requires that people work, most do find jobs, Udow said, but half of all families who leave welfare are back within one year. For those who have been on cash assistance for more than four years, the return rate is even higher -- nearly 70 percent.

Those are the people Republicans sought to reach with their plan to cut off assistance after four years. Budget negotiators agreed to look for ways to move those recipients into jobs and an eight-member, GOP-weighted, legislative work group was named to devise a plan.

"We need to reform our laws so that able-bodied people become more self-sufficient and are not dependent on welfare for a lifetime," Rep. Jerry Kooiman, R-Grand Rapids, co-chair of the group said when members were named last month. Their findings will surface in the bills submitted this week.

They favor progressive sanctions for people who don't comply with work requirements, saying caseworkers are pleading for them. They also want to target people who may be "gaming the system" by falsely claiming disability and receiving FIP benefits while their federal Supplemental Security Income claim is being determined, which can take months.

The administration's proposed JET program would provide more education, training and support services for recipients, while also expanding sanctions for noncompliance by applying them not only to work programs, but to any service a recipient might be assigned to.

"There do need to be sanctions to get the motivation going, because some may not want to work," Udow acknowledged.

The plan would also create a Short Term Family Support Program to divert 10 percent of families experiencing temporary difficulties from returning to the welfare rolls. They would receive a one-time lump sum equal to three times their monthly FIP grant.

With the state budget calling for pilot programs focusing on hard-to-employ recipients, Udow hopes to have the new program up and running early next year in Detroit and Kent, Sanilac and Oakland counties, where 22 additional caseworkers will provide more intensive services for some 5,600 families.

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Traverse City Record Eagle

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EDITORIAL

## **Cut out the pork, not the people**

They did it again. Members of the U.S House of Representatives, faced with an opportunity to cut pork-barrel spending, chose instead last week to stick the knife in the neck of the country's poor, ill and young. By a 217-215 vote, the Republican- controlled House cut \$50 billion over five years from Medicaid, food stamps, student loans and other social programs. Meanwhile, billions of dollars continue to flow into the Iraq war and the no-bid contractors who sustain it.